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Question1: It seems that unintended consequences will always exist, despite the forums. Here's an example. After listening to the forums, Johanns himself acknowledged that conservation is favored by many. It's obvious what this will lead to.

Well, conservation landowners usually become recreational businessmen that cater to outsiders and well to do sportsmen, etc. The USDA caters to this type of landowner as well. This wildlife business aspect is now becoming the focus on rangelands, pasture/farm combinations, and CRP lands. Furthermore, EQIP will continue to reign for the benefit of recreational landowners and big agriculture. I will give you an example showing EQIP's advantage to recreational and large scale operators. Last spring I had to spray prickly pear. I knew that EQIP would pay half of my cost. Here's the kicker. USDA required that I remove my livestock from the treated area. Well, I'm just a little sheep/cow rancher with no other place to put my stock. All the big subsidy operators and recreational enthusiasts don't want any sheep pasturage money. So I don't have anywhere to go with my stock. I go ahead and treat my prickly pear without EQIP participation because I'm the type that's going to get it done whatever it takes. Yes, the state and federal governments slant towards large scale agriculture and recreational use.

Rich folks from all walks will continue buying lands for purposes other than agriculture. Ag production acreages keep shrinking, which intensifies rancher competition for what little leased land is left. Cash rents will reach all time highs. This recreational/conservation component then drives up land prices/cash rents on all land. Here we go again. The younger folks that want to do real farming and ranching still can't compete with the conservation wildlife aspect.

I am personally witnessing and experiencing this today and I'm afraid it's going to get worse. I am small time and I do not participate in USDA programs. I would like to get close to medium size. My wildlife is just as good as my neighbors'. Everything is in harmony on my little spread with no govt help, but all the other folks holding their hands out are the ones that get to hog up all the countryside.

Question2: Why overproduce cotton and corn?

Question3: The current system needs serious limits. We don't want corporations monopolizing our heritage, lifestyles, outbidding small timers, and owning our backyard. Farm Bill 2002 has given the large scale farms a huge advantage.

You have to stop the subsidy cheaters and abusers.

Here's another example showing how the current subsidy system is unfair to smaller segments of the agriculture industry. I am a sheep rancher and I know for a fact that sheep shearers are becoming scarce and starved out. What I am trying to say is that the cost of shearing equipment is skyrocketing. Try shearing enough sheep to pay for an equipped one-man station. A single comb is \$20-\$22. One cutter is \$5.

A handpiece ranges from \$240 - \$480. The list goes on (fuel costs, etc). The USDA can dole out to sheep owners but I'm not aware of the USDA ever helping the sheep shearer. They can live on the meager wages, but the equipments costs are hurting them, not to mention dwindling sheep numbers (another unintended consequence). Is it because most sheepshearers are minorities?

Here's another typical scenario of how USDA loves to further widen the gap. I know of three multimillionaire families nearby that draw large farm subsidy welfare payments.

Over a 9 year period, a Texas oil tycoon family received \$379,000 in CRP payments plus \$24,800 EQIP, and a measly \$4,188 livestock disaster payment.

I know of other millionaire siblings that received \$101,000 crop disaster, \$7,144 conservation payment, and a slim \$1,486 livestock disaster to feed disaster resistant Longhorns. This one in particular mostly pastures zebras, camels, buffaloes, etc.

Then there's the multimillionaire lawyer that I know that received \$123,000 during a 7 year time period. He received \$71,000 in a single year. I know where these properties are and I'm sure there are a multitude of other recipients just like the ones I've described.

Question4: CRP payments ought to be just enough to cover the upkeep costs. Right now, landowners are double dipping because they are hunting it out for big dollars. I've witnessed CRP abuse in that many don't take care of their grasses and like they should. I see brush growing Drawing CRP payments is like drawing welfare.

Large scale ag and high dollar recreational land use is one reason why rural communities are dying. The local folks do not get the opportunity to work the land, hunt the land, or enjoy other ties that bind rural communities. For example, in Texas, absentee landowners are becoming the majority. The reason for this is because governments (state and fed) offer them many advantages to dominate. It's hard to have a rural identity when the land is owned by absentees. A lot of Texas land is becoming idle and I don't think this is good for rural towns.

Question5:

Question6: Help organic agriculture, because it helps the medium and small sized farms. It helps sustain rural communities and heeds environmental concerns. It seems that USDA supports factory style agriculture with a double shot of growth hormones. I guess that's what it'll take, since overall production land is steadily diminishing, but it shouldn't have to be that way.